

IN THE DRAWINGS

Applicants respectfully request permission to amend the drawings as indicated in red on the copy of the drawings attached hereto. Specifically, Applicant requests the following changes to the figures:

In Figs. 1 and 2, add the legend "RELATED ART".

Attachment: Annotated Sheets

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. Claims 2-4, 8-10, 14-16, and 20-22 are cancelled. Claims 1, 5-7, 11-13, 17-19, and 23-25 remain in this application and, as amended herein, are submitted for the Examiner's reconsideration.

Claims 5-6, 11-12, 17-18, and 23-25 have been amended solely to provide proper antecedence and to have the claims better conform to the requirements of U.S. practice. None of these amendments is intended to narrow the scope of any of these claims, and no new matter has been added by these amendments.

In the Office Action, the Examiner required corrected drawings for FIGS. 1-2. FIGS. 1-2 have been amended to include the legend "RELATED ART", and annotated sheets showing the corrections are submitted with the Amendment.

The Examiner objected to the disclosure. The specification has been amended to correct the informality.

Turning now to the art rejections, the Examiner rejected claims 1-2, 5-8, 11-14, 17-20, and 23-25 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Fukushima (European Patent Application No. 0,979,003); and rejected claims 3-4, 9-10, 15-16, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fukushima in view of Isogawa (U.S. Patent No. 4,466,196). Claims 2-4, 8-10, 14-16, and 20-22 are cancelled. Applicants submit that the remaining claims are patentably distinguishable over the cited references.

Claim 1, for example, includes:

discriminating means for receiving an image signal, for discriminating a signal format of the image signal, the signal format including at least one of lightness of the image and color of the image, and for generating a discrimination signal based on the result of said discriminating[.] (Emphasis added.)

Neither the sections of Fukushima that are cited by the Examiner nor the sections of Isogawa that are cited by the Examiner disclose or suggest discriminating a signal format of an image signal where the image signal's format includes one or more of lightness of the image and color of the image. The cited sections of Fukushima merely describe making adjustments in accordance with the brightness of the circumference of an image. (See, e.g., ¶¶ [0001], [0008], and [0018]-[0019].) Moreover, the cited sections of Isogawa are not at all concerned with discriminating a signal format.

Claim 1 also calls for:

said level adjustment means operating in coordination with said illumination controlling means such that if said illumination controlling means lowers the illumination brightness to a minimum brightness at which stable discharge current is maintained in said illuminating means without attaining a desired image contrast, said level adjustment means lowers the luminance signal level to further adjust the image contrast until the desired image contrast is attained.

As acknowledged by the Examiner, Fukushima does not disclose or suggest lowering the luminance signal level when an illumination controlling means has controlled the illumination brightness to a lower limit value. Also, the cited sections of Isogawa only describe decreasing the frequency of the driving pulse signal to adjust the brightness over a wider range than can be attained only by changing the pulse width. (See, col.2, 11.17-25.) Neither the cited sections of Fukushima nor those of Isogawa disclose or suggest that if the illumination brightness is lowered to a minimum brightness at which stable discharge current is maintained in an illuminating means without attaining a desired image contrast, the luminance signal level is lowered to further adjust the image contrast until the desired image contrast is attained.

It follows that neither the cited sections of Fukushima nor the cited sections of Isogawa, whether taken alone or in combination, discloses or suggests the apparatus defined in claim 1. Claim 1 is therefore patentably distinct and unobvious over the cited references.

Claims 5-6 depend from claim 1 and are distinguishable over the cited art for at least the same reasons.

Independent claims 7, 13, and 19 have each been amended in a manner similar to that of claim 1. Therefore, each of claims 7, 13, and 19 is distinguishable over the cited references for at least the same reasons.

Claims 11-12 depend from claim 7, claims 17-18 depend from claim 13, and claims 23-25 depend from claim 19. Therefore, each of claims 11-12, 17-18, and 23-25 is distinguishable over the cited art for at least the same reasons as the claim from which it depends.

Applicants therefore respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a).

As it is believed that all of the rejections set forth in the Official Action have been fully met, favorable reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited. If, however, for any reason the Examiner does not believe that such action can be taken at this time, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone applicant's attorney at (908) 654-5000 in order to overcome any additional objections which the Examiner might have.

Application No.: 10/700,416

Docket No.: SONYJP 3.0-347

If there are any additional charges in connection with this requested amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 12-1095 therefor.

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Respectfully submitted,

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